

Message Text

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17

ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2653

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 1230

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MY, XC

SUBJ: KUALA LUMPUR ANSWERS HANOI

REF (A) KUALA LUMPUR 1130 (NOTAL), (B) MANILA 3057 (DTG 30804Z MAR 65)

1. SUMMARY. THE GOM HAS JOINED IN THE CHORUS OF RESPONSE TO THE RECENT ATTACKS BY HANOI ON ASEAN, BUT HAS MAINTAINED A RELATIVELY CONCILIATORY TONE IN THE EXPECTATION OF EVENTUAL ACCOMMODATION WITH INDOCHINA. END SUMMARY.

2. IN THE GOM'S FIRST PUBLIC REJOINDER TO THE RECENT ATTACKS BY HANOI ON ASEAN, FOREIGN MINISTER TENGKU AHMAD RITHAUDDEEN ON MAR 3 DENIED THE ALLEGATION THAT ASEAN WAS BEING USED BY THE UMS. AND SAID THAT ASEAN WAS ESTABLISHED FOR THE BENEFIT OF THRE REGION AND THE CREATION OF CLOSER ECONOMIC TIES AMONG SOUTHEAST ASIAN
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COUNTRIES. IN A MALAYSIAN TV INTERVIEW RITHAUDDEEN

NOTED THAT ASEAN HAD WISHED THAT BURMA, LAOS, CAMBODIA AND VIETNAM WOULD JOIN THE ORGANIZATION AND HOPED THAT, IF THEY CHOSE NOT TO JOIN, THEY COULD COOPERATE WITH IT IN THE INTEREST OF THE REGION

3. A MAR 4 EDITORIAL IN THE GOVERNMENT-INFLUENCED "NEW STRAITS TIMES" (NST) REFERRED TO THE FIRST "NONSENSICAL ALLEGATION" BY NORTH VIETNAM THAT THE US. STAGED THE BALI SUMMIT FOR ITS PURPOSE OF INTERVENTION AND AGRESSION AND TO THE SECOND HANOI STATEMENT THAT A NEW CONFRONTATION HAD EMERGED BETWEEN INDOCHINA AND THE NATIONS OF "REACTION." IN WORDS CLOSELY PARALLEL TO THOSE OF PHILIPPINE PRESIDENT MARCOS (REF B), THE EDITORIAL NOTED THAT THE NEW REGIMES IN INDOCHINA ARE MILITANT IN TEMPER AND IDEOLOGY, BUT THAT THEY HAVE YET TO PROVE THEY ARE MILITANT IN ACTION; NEVERTHELESS, WHILE IT IS NOT UNUSUAL THAT NATIONS HIDE THEIR LACK OF STRONG ACTIONS BEHIND A BARRAGE OF STRONG WORDS, "HANOI SHOULD BE INFORMED IN NO UNCERTAIN TERMS THAT IT SHOULD WATCH ITS STEP, THAT OTHERS WILL CERTAINLY BE WATCHING IT." THE EDITORIAL CONTINUED: "IT REMAINS UNCLEAR TO WHAT EXTENT NORTH VIETNAM'S POSITION IS THE RESULT OF MISUNDERSTANDING OF ASEAN'S ORIGINS, PAST OBJECTIVES AND PRESENT PURPOSE AND TO WHAT EXTENT HANOI HAS COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT PEACEFUL AND CONSTRUCTIVE CO-EXISTENCE WITH NON-COMMUNIST STATES IS POSSIBLE." THE EDITORIAL CONCLUDED BY NOTING THAT THE ASEAN STATES HAVE MADE IT CLEAR THAT THEY DO NOT WANT A TWO-BLOC CONFRONTATION IN THE REGION BY EXTENDING THE HAND OF FRIENDSHIP TO INDOCHINA, BUT "FRIENDSHIP IS ALWAYS A TWO-WAY PROCESS;" THE ASEAN STATES ARE PEACEFUL AND HAVE NO INTENTION OF PROVOKING THE COMMUNIST NEIGHBORS, BUT "WE ARE NOT AFRAID AND WOULD LOOK AFTER OUR SECURITY."

4. COMMENT: THE KUALA LUMPUR PRESS HAS GIVE PROMINENT PLAY IN THE LAST FEW DAYS TO THE RECENT RAJARATNAM, MALIK AND MARCOS REBUTTALS OF THE HANOI CHARGES.
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(EXCERPTS FROM THE INDONESIAN PRESS ON THE SUBJECT WERE FEATURED IN THE FEB 4 NST COVERAGE OF THE RITHAUDDEEN STATEMENT AND IN A LONG ARTICLE ON THE EDITORIAL PAGE.) HOWEVER, RITHAUDDEEN'S REMARKS ARE THE FIRST OFFICIAL GOM STATEMENT IN ANY WAY CRITICAL OF THE HANOI CHARGES. THE RELATIVELY MILD ADMONITION OF THE DRV IN BOTH THE RITHAUDDEEN STATEMENT AND THE NST EDITORIAL, EACH OF WHICH IS COUPLED WITH HOPEFUL AND CONCILIATORY COMMENTS

ON HANOI'S INTENTIONS, REFLECTS THE OFFICIAL GOM LINE
THAT THE CURRENT HOSTILITY OF THE INDOCHINA STATES IS
ONLY A PASSING PHENOMENON. WE MIGHT NOTE, HOWEVER,
THAT, NOTWITHSTANDING THE OFFICIAL LINE, WE
THINK THAT MOST OFFICIALS INVOLVED IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS
IN THE GOM ARE BECOMING LESS SANGUINE OVER THE CHANCES
OF RAPPROCHEMENT WITH HANOI.
UNDERHILL

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